

ReZero Extra Chapter: King

Speaker Color Code: Ram, Rem, Subaru, Emilia, Beatrice, etc.

----One fateful day, Subaru's ideas brought forth a miracle.

“Hey Emilia-tan, you're studying to become the king, right?”

Subaru's after-meal small talk cuts through the silence. The manor's chief resident, sitting squarely at the center of the dining hall, turns toward him. Unable to resist, everyone's ears prick up to listen in on their conversation.

----This coincidence would be the first of many twists of fate.

Sitting next to Subaru, a girl casually curls her long, silver hair about her finger, her other hand affectionately poking a cat-like spirit. Hearing his question, Emilia gently turns her head.

“Yeah, that's right, but why ask all of a sudden?”

“Well it's not really ‘all of a sudden.’ It's always been kinda hanging out in the corner of my mind. The thought that, the girl sitting right next to me, the one glaring at a plate of peppers, if things work out, she'll actually be the *king* someday.”

“Don't talk to me about the Green Devil, peppir.”

Returning Subaru's banter with her own, an unamused Emilia pokes at his forehead. The lightness of her touch, the thought that beyond this solid nail lies her abundant softness, enraptures him. Ram observes Subaru with a side glance as she passes by, carrying a small tray with a single teacup, steam rising from its lip.

“What a slovenly face.”

she utters, flatly expressing her disgust. Subaru grimaces back, baring his teeth like a child.

“Popping out of nowhere with such weird timing. Don't go around staring at people's faces then. Also, only bringing out tea for Ros-chi, isn't that just a bit too much favoritism?”

“Favoritism? This is simply a matter of Ram's priorities. At the top is Roswaal-sama, then Emilia-sama and the Great Spirit, and behind an unscalable wall, in the deepest pits of the mustiest cave.... I suppose Barusu might be there.”

“I don't remember such a wide popularity gap!?”

Puffing her chest out, Ram boldly ignores Subaru's protests. With a near gliding motion, she makes her way toward her master. At the head of the table, his eyes on a book, Roswaal notices Ram. He takes the cup of black tea with a steady motion and brings it to his lips, savoring the taste,

“Hmhmhm----, Ram’s after-meal tea reaaaally helps with settling down. You could saaaaay I live just for this one cup, no?”

“Your words are far too kind.”

When dealing with Roswaal, Ram’s attitude is comparatively graceful and obedient. Witnessing the staggering difference in treatment right before his eyes, Subaru strangely loses his will to fight back. Instead, a depressive feeling begins to possess Subaru.

“Please don’t be too upset, Subaru-kun. Nee-sama is just doing Rem a favor.”

A voice rebukes the sulking Subaru. Its owner, a young girl garbed in maid dress, steps out from the galley. ----With a large tray in each hand, Rem carries teacups for the remaining residents.

Seeing Subaru’s head turn toward her, Rem’s face brightens, her hands lifting the trays with incredible ease.

“Subaru-kun’s tea, Rem absolutely wanted to make it for him. Rem even had Nee-sama reteach her the basics.”

“Hohoo----, what an admirable server’s spirit, Rem. Alright, that determination of yours, I’ll personally taste it!”

“Yes, please do. Under Nee-sama’s watch, this tea was brewed with Rem’s bone-breaking, blood-spewing resolution. Rem

brewed as if betting anything and everything on this single cup. Now, please enjoy.”

“You’re whittling down your soul over a casual *tea break*!?”

Nodding back at a shocked Subaru, Rem places her *all-or-nothing* tea onto the table. A gentle trail of steam rises from its surface. At a glance, it looks like perfectly normal tea, but Rem poured her blood and soul into it. The iron content must be amazing.

“Well, no use getting worked up. Lemme see, ----ohh, delicious! Compared to normal tea, I can’t disagree that it seems to bring about this totally different impression that it doesn’t necessarily not give off this faintly pleasant feeling probably!”

“Wait, so does that mean it’s good? Does it?”

Emilia tilts her head at Subaru’s overly-spirited impression. In all honesty, Subaru thought the tea was delicious. Delicious, but how it differs from regular tea, he has no clue. In the first place, Subaru rarely ever had stylish drinks like black tea and coffee. In his own world, with his childish taste, he mainly drank soda or, on a good day, some hot chocolate.

“Now that I think about it, it’s been a while since I’ve had Cola. Carbonated water, I think it came from carbon dioxide, so maybe we can make it here too.”

“Subaru-kun, Subaru-kun, how was the tea?”

“Hm? Oh, delicious! Wow, I can really taste your passion in this!”

“Really!by the way, does your body feel hot, Subaru-kun?”

“Hot....? Nah, I don’t think I feel anything like that.”

His head cocked, Subaru frowns at Rem’s strange observation. While somewhat strong, the tea didn’t noticeably affect his body. All he feels is its gentle warmth pleasantly spreading through his stomach.

With Subaru’s dismissive reply, Rem briefly gazes at him. With a slight disappointment in her eyes, she hides her mouth behind a tray,

“If Subaru-kun enjoyed it, then Rem is happy.”

“Your face and your words and the color of your eyes and that last question don’t seem to match up though?”

“That’s not true. More importantly, if Subaru-kun is satisfied with the tea, Rem doesn’t mind being praised, yes?”

“You’re pretty needy, y’know! Well, I guess it’s alright. C’mere.”

Seeing Rem flutter her eyes in anticipation, Subaru waves to beckon her over. With Rem’s body drawn close, the palm of his hand caresses her blue hair. An invisible tail wags happily behind her as she blissfully closes her eyes. The faint sound of her gentle

sniffing, the way she snuggles up to him, Subaru's heart is in a panic.

Having completely forgotten his original goal, Subaru is suddenly struck with a piercing stare from behind.

“*sta----are*”

“It's amazing how, even when glaring with such scornful eyes, a beauty stays a beauty.... What's up?”

“Don't 'what's up' me. Our talk, if you cut off part-way, I'll get reaaally bothered about it.”

““Our talk?””

replies Subaru, a genuine confusion in his voice. He wrinkles his face and puts a finger to his lips. Emilia's eyes begin to flare, panicking Subaru as he raises up his arms,

“Sorry, *lo siento*, I overdid it, please forgive me!”

“I'll forgive you, and I'll even hear you out, so just say what's on your mind. Come on, *one*, *two*.”

Emilia's waving hands urging him on, a clueless Subaru smiles bitterly as he scratches his head. At the brink of death, he suddenly mutters an “Ah,”

“Emilia-tan, you're aiming to become the king, right?”

“That question, I’m pretty sure you asked me something like that already....”

“The route splits here. Anyway, to become a king, you obviously need to be very skilled. But don’t you think ‘preparedness’ is just as important?”

“‘Preparedness....’”

Emilia mutters back with a rather shocked face, her eyes blinking at Subaru’s statement. Most likely, she thought his idea would be completely unrelated. While Subaru would have liked to meet her expectations, he thought her surprised face wasn’t bad either. Luckily, after the initial shock, a look of agreement appears in her eyes, as if to say “You’ve got a point.”

Seeing this, Subaru snaps his fingers with a boastful “Right?”

“The resolution to stand above all, the strength to withstand the pressures of people’s expectations. And above all else, the indomitable will to pursue one’s convictions----! To call yourself a king, one must wield these essential traits!”

Clenching his fist tightly, Subaru stands to deliver a loud and impassioned speech. Naturally, the stares of everyone converge on him. Joy, disgust, astonishment, loving affection, Subaru bathes in a mix of feelings as he looks about the room. In the midst of this, Emilia timidly raises her hand,

“Subaru, I can see where you’re coming from, but... what do you actually plan on doing?”

“Simple. As a king candidate, these traits are necessary to Emilia-tan. So I was thinking, how about we help you practice?”

“Umm....?”

He brings his face in close and snaps his fingers. Emilia, unable to follow along, blinks in confusion. Snickering at her puzzlement, Subaru decides to push through with spirit alone.

With a wicked smile, Subaru boldly stamps his foot on a chair, raising himself up. From his new height, he looks about the room, his finger pointed straight to the heavens as he pulls his signature pose. And he yells,

“The first ever [Roswaal Manor King’s Game] begins now!”

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“The rules are simple! First, we prepare lots for everyone. One lot has the king’s stamp while the rest are duds with numbers on them. We all draw, and the king uses the numbers to make commands. The commands are absolute, the king’s orders *must* be obeyed. ----That’s it!”

At the center of the dining hall, Subaru explains the rules of the [King’s Game]. Roswaal nods at the game’s simplicity, his hand

cradling his chin. Satisfied with Subaru's brief rundown, he heartily laughs,

"I seeeee. What simple yet maaaaarvelous rules."

"Simple, but with a sense of tension.... you could say that's the essence of this game."

Subaru flashes Roswaal back a thumbs up. He then turns toward Rem who is excitedly preparing the lots. While he trusts her, fairness was essential to the King's Game.

In this game, victory came down to sheer luck, ----On the other hand, real kings are decided by blood and lineage. Yet, if the King's Game fell into such a pattern, cynicism would quickly bring its end.

"The lots are finished."

"Kay, lemme see.... Yup, no problems. Let's do this!"

Subaru quickly inspects Rem's lots.

A number is written on the end of each wooden stick. The only exception is Subaru's chibi drawing of Puck, serving as the king's stamp.

Even under careful scrutiny, Subaru can't find any trick or feature to distinguish it from the duds. This game should proceed without a hitch.

"So the person who draws Puck becomes king?"

“Exactly. Also, the king makes commands using the numbers. Everyone else should make sure to keep their own number hidden. The randomness is part of the thrill afterall.”

“Oh my. But that means it won’t be possible to bombard Barusu with hard labor.”

“We have this rule because of people like you! No calling out names either!”

After lecturing Ram, Subaru sighs as he looks around the table. Since it’s immediately after a meal, everyone would be present. Emilia, Rem, Ram, Roswaal, then there’s Puck and Subaru and----

“Huh, hey, where’d Bea-ko go? Pretty sure she was in the corner, frantically pulling the green peas from her omelet rice.”

“Beatrice-sama rushed out the dining hall when Subaru-kun tried to stand on the chair.”

“That damn drill loli.... messing with my plans. Alright, wait here for a bit.”

With that, Subaru flies out the dining hall in a full-on sprint. And then, exactly two minutes later,

“Heeey, I’m baack----”

“Honestly, what in the world is that sixth sense of yours!? Betty won’t be getting tangled up in your nonsense!”

“Yeah yeah, attention seekers sure like to bad-mouth. Okay, that should be everyone.”

Forcibly slinging Beatrice over his shoulder, Subaru plops her onto a chair. With his hands on her shoulders to block off her escape, Beatrice surrenders with a defeated sigh. She moves next to Puck, glaring daggers back at Subaru. Dodging her razor-sharp stare, Subaru decides everything is set.

“Do it.”

“Yes.”

Rem, seeing Subaru’s outstretched hand, places the lots without hesitation. Seeing exactly one lot added for Beatrice, Subaru desperately holds back a grin. However, a distinctly wicked sharpness was already emerging on his face.

Puck shuffles the wooden sticks in a chaotic flurry. With the numbers hidden, everyone reaches for a lot.

“Okay, everyone got one? Then let’s go with the traditional phrase here, ----Whooo’s the king?”

Subaru yells with a wide grin as everyone pulls their lot. Dropping his gaze down, an extremely disappointed Subaru finds his lot marked with the number [2].

Once one discovers they're not the king, all that's left is to wait and see who is. ----And then, timidly raising her hand,

“Hey, mine's got Puck on it.”

And so, the first draw goes to Emilia.

In her hand lies Chibi Puck's stamp, and on her face, a blend of surprise and modest embarrassment,

“Umm, so what do I do now?”

“Emilia-tan, you're the king now, so just go all out with the commands. Like making [2] pet the king's head, or making [2] hold the king's hand, or making [2] nap in the king's lap pillow, or making [2] lovingly feed the king, or making [2] promise to take the king on a hot date....”

“Then [2] takes all the peppirs from the king's dinner and eats them----!”

“*Nuooooo!* Inception **FAILED!** I'm number [2]!”

As Subaru screams, hands shaking his head, a genuinely surprised Emilia remarks “Oh, so Subaru was [2]!”

That said, orders are orders. Only by complying can Subaru protect the sanctity of the King's Game.

“Anyway, if there aren’t any peppers in tonight’s dinner, then I’m off the hook!”

“Rem. I’ll be counting on you for a menu buuursting with peppirs. A dinner table simply paaaainted green, I hope to see it tonight.”

“Damn Roswaal.... You sure catch on fast don’cha!”

Having lost his escape route, Subaru turns to Rem. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, this girl must suddenly make one of the hardest decisions of her life,

“Rem wants to prioritize Subaru-kun. But, Roswaal-sama is Rem’s employer. That’s why, ignoring his request is.... Rem is sorry.”

“What’s the real reason?”

“When eating peppirs, Emilia-sama stands out, so it’s hard to notice, but Subaru-kun makes a face at them too. Rem thought to use this chance to correct him.”

“You watch me pretty carefully, huh!?”

In terms of looks, texture, and taste, peppers and peppirs are virtually identical. With his childish taste, Subaru hates them. While he pretends to tolerate them in front of Emilia, he secretly wants to avoid peppirs at all costs. Subaru actually hates quite a

few vegetables, including tomatoes, eggplants, and turnips.
----Rem undoubtedly knows this as well.

“Anyway, let’s just start the second round. Alright, whooo’s the king?”

“Oh hey, it’s me.”

Despite his desperate yells, Subaru once again draws a dud. Following Emilia, the next bearer of fortune is the grey-furred cat spirit ----Puck uses both hands to carry a lot as large as him. Tilting his head to the side,

“Calling out names is against the rules right? Then.... how about [5] finger-flicks [1]’s forehead, or something like that?”

“Oohh, calling out two numbers at once.... Puck, you’re not an amateur, are you?”

“Can this game even have pros and amateurs?anyway, who’s [5] and [1]?”

As Puck’s black eyes restlessly search the room, two raised lots meet his sight. Ram holds a lot with [5] marked on its end while a [1] is marked on Emilia’s.

“This means Ram must flick Emilia-sama’s forehead. Oh my, how disrespectful, how irreverent. To be forced to finger flick Emilia-sama.... What a terrifying game this is....!”

“Ram, you say that, but you actually seem reaaally into this....
Umm, you’re just acting right? Right? But.... don’t make it hurt too much, okay?”

“It wouldn’t be a finger flick if it didn’t hurt. Hya.”

“Kyaaa----! Owowow! That reaaally hurt!”

As a red mark emerges on Emilia’s lovely forehead, Ram relaxes with a satisfied look on her face. While Emilia looks about ready to cry, such lighthearted shenanigans are the very essence of the King’s Game. Considering the rules and spirit of the game, Ram’s attitude was actually more appropriate.

“From here on, nobody should target Ram for revenge. Don’t try to get back at each other either. ----Okay, let’s start round three! Whooo’s the king?”

With this game’s chaotic, random nature, a person could never have the chance to order or be ordered. The desire to avoid leaving anyone out, as the organizer of this game, Subaru holds this modest thought in his heart,

“----**DESTINY, DRAAAAAAW!**”

But with the King’s lot in hand, Subaru no longer cares for such a petty cause. Fists clenched as he makes a guts pose, Subaru chants “**YES, YES, YES**”, thanking the Dragon.

“Are, are you really that happy? You’ve only become king once though.”

“Playing the King’s Game without achieving kingship is pointless, Emilia-tan! Alright, let’s do this.... Then again, suddenly going full throttle and ruining the atmosphere wouldn’t be good. Yeah, no good.”

While he sounds unambitious, it’s often said that impatient beggars don’t prosper. The best strategy, Subaru decides, is to calm down and take his time. First, he should focus on crafty opening moves to bolster his endgame. Eventually, after lulling everyone into a false sense of security, when their guard is at its lowest, a decisive strike----

“----Number [3], take off just your underwear.”

“----huh?”

A decisive strike. Catching a glimpse of Emilia, Subaru’s patience suddenly runs thin. As the command escapes his mouth, the air seems to freeze dry, everyone’s dumbfounded stares on his face. However, once made, a command cannot be taken back. As the others stare on in disbelief, wondering if they misheard him, Subaru nods back affirmatively,

“Number [3], takes off, their underwear. **HURRY!**”

“Eh, wait, what? You can make commands like that!?”

“Of course you can! Aren’t the king’s orders absolute!? If the king told you to die for him, then isn’t it an underling’s duty to follow that order and stake their very life!? Even if just for now, aren’t I the king, and everyone here my underling!? Then if I say ‘strip,’ then you must strip! So strip!”

Pounding the table, Subaru begins his fevered tirade. Emilia opens and closes her mouth, speechless, while to her side, Roswaal bursts into laughter. Ram stares at Subaru with the deepest, harshest disdain. Nobody notices the glint in Rem’s eyes as she looks down to check her lot. And beside the flustered Emilia, an unconcerned Puck. And finally, in the process of sneakily escaping the room, Beatrice----

“Hey Betty, what number are ya?”

“I was hoping you’d keep quiet, Bubby!?”

Caught by Puck, Beatrice turns around with a panicked face. Seeing her reaction, Puck grabs the lot laid in front of her chair,

“Oh hey, it’s [3]. Looks like Betty’s gotta strip. But hey, if I was [3], what would I even do? I’m basically naked afterall.”

“In that case, I’ll make you some clothes, so just put them on and strip them off. Seems kinda pointless but.... Anyway, Bea-ko, huh.”

Subaru glimpses at Beatrice. She stands near the dining hall entrance, her noble face turned bright red, her small hands clenched and quivering,

“God.... read the atmosphere a little.”

“You’re the last person who deserves to say that! What kind of ridiculous command are you spewing! Why would Betty even bother obeying such an order....”

“Hmm, ohhh, I see, I see. So you’re just going to callously ignore the game’s biggest rule. Uh huh, I get it.”

“Wh-, what’s with that scornful tone of yours....”

Shaken by the clear disappointment in Subaru’s words, Beatrice nervously turns away. Side glancing at her, Subaru gives a trite

“Nothing really” as he sighs wearily,

“You know, in games like this, there’s sort of this implicit pact of trust between players. At least, that’s what I think. Like, no matter what the command, we should challenge it with sincerity and effort. The resolution to take on the task given to you.... you could think of it like your dignity as a person.”

“Dignity, you saaaay.”

An amused Roswaal can't contain himself as he interrupts. Subaru replies with a firm "Yup, dignity" as he nods boldly. Suddenly, he points a finger at Beatrice. Intimidated by his forcefulness, the drill-haired girl faintly draws back.

"It's not about results! What's important is the will to protect our oath! You, who took part in this game, have received an order from the king. You could say that this order represents the king's implicit trust. The effort you make to meet this trust halfway.... that is the proof of the precious bond between you and I."

"-----"

"It might just be a one-sided sentiment. After all, this is solely my opinion, and you have every right to disagree. But y'know.... here's what I think. By playing the King's Game like this, what we're really doing is confirming the bonds between us. These threads of fate that our eyes can never truly see, ----and yet, I definitely feel them binding us together."

With a hand crossed over his chest, Subaru relentlessly pits his heart against hers. The weight of his rhetoric, the violent torrent that is his emotions, Beatrice can only drop her head against them, her lips quivering. But with a look of genuine kindness, Subaru reaches his hand out toward hers,

"That's why.... just strip already."

“-----”

“It’s kinda gotten annoying, so how about you just read the atmosphere and take off your underwear. It’s not like I’m really anticipating it. I probably won’t even react all that much. So?”

“----You should just die, I suppose.”

Suddenly, an invisible shockwave of tremendous force blasts against Subaru.

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“I have confirmed Beatrice-sama removing and putting back on her underwear in the neighboring room. There should be no problem regarding the rules. Satisfied, Barusu?”

“....Yeah, I’m good.”

As Ram scornfully reports back, a red-faced Beatrice trails behind her. With a defeated look, Subaru wearily answers.

For pushing Beatrice past her limit, Subaru was violently sent flying. Left, right, up, down, direction itself feels utterly meaningless after taking the blow. As his eyes spin in their sockets, Rem gallantly rushes over to tend to him,

“Are you alright, Subaru-kun? It’s still too early to be moving about.... If Subaru-kun wants, he can lie on Rem’s lap, yes?”

“A situation even a king would envy. And during the King’s Game, no less. Really tempting, but the game must go on. Thanks though.”

Declining the devoted Rem’s offer, Subaru somehow gets up, and the two rejoin the group. Despite everything, no one seems to have dropped out.

“You guys.... when all’s said and done, you’re all pretty sadistic, huh.”

“Wouldn’t it be quite saaad for that to be the final act? Besides, I haven’t eeeven had a chance to be the king nor a victim yet.”

“Calling them kings and victims, you really do catch on fast.... Well Bea-ko’s a tsundere, so of course she’s back for more, but what about you, Emilia-tan?”

Insulted, Beatrice glares back harshly, but Subaru casually ignores her. In front of him, a flustered Emilia waves her hands erratically as she replies,

“That’s, I, you know I just.... umm-”

“Yeah, what’s up? If you’ve got something to say, I’m all ears.”

“Y-, you won’t laugh.... right?”

“Me? Laughing at Emilia-tan? That’s ridiculous. Even if you acted like a clown, I still wouldn’t laugh at you, Emilia-tan.”

Though Beatrice continues to glare hatefully, Subaru pays her no mind, a refreshing expression on his face. Emilia seems to be internally debating---- in her head, a small council agrees to trust him as she makes a little nod,

“You know I, I’ve never really done this before, playing together with so many people.... It was, really fun and.... If we stopped here, I feel like it’d be a waste.”

“What the heck, this kid’s so cute.”

Subaru can’t resist as Emilia, cheeks flushed red, bashfully explains herself. Feeling teased, she puffs her cheeks,

“See, you always poke fun at me like that. This is reaaally embarrassing, you know.”

“No, it’s not like I’m poking fun.... damn, am I going to die explaining myself like this?Please forgive me!”

Subaru falls to Emilia’s overwhelming strength. The others gaze at her gently, empathetically. While they now feel willing to continue, the harsh glares piercing Subaru still seem to linger. That said, with Emilia’s feelings in mind, the game starts anew.

“Whooo’s the king!”

Grabbing their lots, everyone hastily drops their gaze. A lot marked [4] lies in Subaru's hand. While somewhat frustrated, he decides that consecutive kinghoods would dullen the game. Thinking this, and yet *still* treading his feet angrily, even after Emilia's innocent remarks, is the man named Natsuki Subaru.

Next to Subaru, hoisting up the lot marked with chibi Puck, is Rem. While she bears her usual cool demeanor, her eyes are fiery and bright,

“Rem is the king. King-sama. Rem did it, Subaru-kun. Rem became king.”

“Well, I'm happy for you, but you're way too excited! We gotta keep dishing out orders so everyone gets a turn.... Well, king-sama, what is your command?”

“Oh yes, that's right. How careless of Rem.”

Rem's furiously wagging tail droops for a moment, but she just as quickly brightens up again. Then, gazing intensely at Subaru,

“Well then, Suba-.... number [1], please hug the king in a loving embrace, yes?”

“It's SUPER obvious who you're targeting here! And sorry to break it to you, but I'm **NOT** number [1]!”

Subaru flashes his lot, and a shocked Rem falls to her feet. From her morbid expression, you would think the world was ending. While rare to see such great despair in the King's Game, Subaru, recalling her target, feels uneasy. In any case, whoever is number [1] must now hug Rem,

“Rem, come here.”

“Nee-sama....!”

Rem raises her head to see her sister raising the lot marked [1]. With a small dash, she jumps into her Ram's open arms. A beautiful sisterly love---- is how you *could* describe it, if not for what she whispers into Rem's ear,

“Look closely, Rem. In the end, this is all Barusu amounts to. A fickle, intolerant man who can't grant Rem even a single wish.... This king selection game has made that painfully clear.”

“Would you not slander me in front of one of my only allies! Also, this game's about the king selecting, not *being* selected. You make it sound like a completely different game!”

“Nee-sama.... Nee-sama.... Rem, won't give up.”

As Ram comforts her, Rem rubs her cheeks against older sister. Seeing these beautiful twins so intimate, Subaru fights desperately to keep his delusions under control. Clearing his throat nervously, he pushes on to the next game.

“Alright, let’s get back into the spirit of things here.... Whooo’s the king!”

“Oh my, it appears I’ve fiiinally done it. But now that I’m king.... I unexpectedly can’t deciide on a command.”

A smiling Roswaal waves the king’s lot in his hand. Hearing his announcement, Subaru breaks into a cold sweat. ----Out of everyone here, this unpredictable man is the game’s biggest wildcard.

Since long ago, those who enjoy the King’s Game could be separated into different archetypes.

Subaru, earnestly greedy for anything and everything within reach, is an [Omnivore].

Rem, who singlemindedly pursues a certain individual, is a [Carnivore].

Puck, who casually dishes out commands with little care or thought, is an [Herbivore].

Emilia, who enjoys the King’s Game for the game itself, is a [Dinner Guest].

And finally, Roswaal, who clearly sees the suffering of his victims as the very point of the game, is a [Glutton].

Unafraid of becoming a victim himself, a threatening existence who seeks only to be entertained---- that is the man who now reigns as king.

With a deep breath, Subaru prays that the [3] in his hand escapes being called. And then Roswaal, after glancing at the nervous Subaru,

“Well then, hooow about **Number [3]** chugs some milk mixed with tabasco sauce!”

“Damn you Roswaal! Like you’re aiming for me!!”

“Here, Barusu----. Show us something nice----.”

As if colluding with him, Ram responds to Roswaal’s ruthless command at lightning speed.

In her hand, she cradles a cup of milk with an uneven, reddish hue. Laden with tabasco (other-worldly tabasco), this substance reeks of an *ungodly* stench.

“....really?”

“The King’s Game, a confirmation of the bonds between us. These threads of fate that our eyes can never truly see....”

“When you put it that way.... damnnit! Here goes Natsuki Subaru! ----gah, ough, my throat.... burning.... **Abdul!**”

Clutching his scorched throat, Subaru crumbles to the floor. On the verge of tears, he slams his emptied cup onto the table.

“How’s that, HUH! Pulled through, HUH! Any complaints, HUH!”

“No, no, that should be quiiite enough for now. Also, let’s put a ban on cleansing your palate. Well then, on to the next game, shaaaall we.”

“Damn you, next time I’ll definitely.... Whooo’s the----
DESTINYYYYYY, DRAAAAAAW!!”

Overjoyed at drawing the king’s lot, Subaru completely forgets his anger toward Roswaal.

Raising Puck’s stamp up into air, Subaru’s eyes gleam brightly.

“Okay! Number [2]! Number [2] has to let the king stick his face in their breasts! At least until the next game! How’s that!”

Staring at Emilia, Subaru yells his command.

With seven participants total, by not including himself, four out of six are women. Emilia is his top pick, but Rem wouldn’t be bad either. Ram would be, well okay. And the one holding the lot marked [2] is,

“Hey, you got some sort of grudge against me----!?”

“That line is *entirely* Betty’s, I suppose!? You, what are you even thinking!?”

Facing Beatrice yet again, Subaru screams, and Beatrice screams back. However, the commands are absolute, the king’s

orders *must* be obeyed. In any case, after overcoming the underwear command, this order hardly phases Beatrice.

“Come on, hurry on over then. Quickly, so Betty can finally play with Bubby.”

“Damn, this is just disappointing.... Whoa, they’re *seriously* flat! You damn loli, this is practically a *crime scene*.... what’s the matter? Did someone cast the **[Flat Chest]** status abnormality on yo- OWOWOWOWW!!”

“The next time such nonsense dribbles out your mouth, I’ll accelerate time for your scalp and leave you a skinhead, I suppose. Come on now, whooo is the king!”

With the disinterested Beatrice finally onboard, the ensuing games progressed smoothly and much less violently. Skipping through a digest of events,

“This time for sure....! Subaru-kun, will you.... No, Number [5], please kiss the king’s forehead....!”

“I’m not even number [5]! Also, would you stop blindly demanding these things!?”

“Oh, that’s me. Okay Rem, lemme just give you a quick peck....”

“You don’t see too many forehead kisses nowadays!”

“Number [6], go around the manor garden.... no, it’s faaar too cramped. Hooow about going to the back mountains and checking on the barrier. Just a quick, eeeasy ten rounds or so.”

“That would kill me! And just after getting blasted and.... wait, are you *targeting* me!?”

“Then, Number [4], clean Ram-sama’s room. If there’s even a speck of dust left, it’ll be the whip for you.”

“Ram-sama’s so queen-like it’s refreshing, damnnit! But seriously, it’s like both you and Roswaal are hounding me.... You, you better not be using your [Clairvoyance]!?”

“....hmph, and if I was, what of it, Barusu.”

“Don’t spin this like *I’m* the one in the wrong here! I *knew* something was off!”

“***DESTINYYY AGAAAIIN!*** Alright, Number [4] serves the king a homecooked meal filled to the brim with love.... ***YOU AGAIN!?***”

“You can have this thing I burned and boiled and dried, I suppose.”

“You guys sure are friendly. I’d like to spend some time with Lia too.”

“Oh hey, it’s me. Well, how about Number [2] feeds me that mayonnaise thing I’ve been craving lately.”

“Oh my, oh myyy, quiiite a pampered attitude for a great spirit. I would be hoonored to carry out this request.”

“Nobody cares! Do it in the corner or something!”

“Yes, finally it’s Betty’s turn, I suppose. Bubby.... err, Number [4] lets Betty rub their belly. Until I’m satisfied!”

“Despite how I look, I’m actually quite ripped!”

“You, do you have some sort of grudge against Betty!?”

“*I’m* the one ready to flip my shit! What are you, my *soul mate*!?”

And so, a slew of bittersweet events come one after the other. With the game reaching its twentieth round, feelings of weariness and accomplishment push the King’s Game towards its climax.

“Oh, it’s me, I’m the king. Let’s see, let’s seeee.... What should I dooo?”

After drawing the king’s lot, Emilia ponders cheerfully with a finger to her lips. Cheeks faintly red, she seems unusually energetic today. As Subaru looks on, he feels a mix of attraction and unease.

Finally, the spirited girl in front of him nods with a cheerful “Okay,”

“Then, Number [6].... how about they compare the opposite gender to animals?”

“I’m [6], but.... why?”

“Boo. Just do it. C’mon, Subaru. Hurry, hurry!”

Subaru can’t help but tilt his head as Emilia lightly drums against the table, urging him on. Surprised by her unwomanly behavior, he nevertheless strokes his chin and thinks,

“Well, Ram’s a cat and Rem’s like a puppy. Bea-ko’s a bear.... and Emilia-tan’s a bunny, I guess.”

“How so?”

“I was thinking what kind of animal cosplay would suit everyone. Cat ears for the fickle, moody Ram, and dog ears for the gentle, obedient Rem. Emilia-tan is kind of lonely and cute so she gets bunny ears, and.... well, ‘Bea-ko’ sounds kinda like ‘bear’ so she can have bear ears, I guess.”

“Compared to the rest, Betty’s reasoning sounded very lacking, I suppose!”

“Who would worry so seriously about this.... Huh? Emilia-tan, what are you-”

With a goofy smile emerging on her face, Emilia raises her hands up. Waving them around, she giggles with a cute “Ehe----,”

“Fine detail isn’t really my specialty, but hoow’s this!”

“How’s what.... oooohhh!”

The brilliant light emanating from her hands begins to fade. And what suddenly appears on top of Emilia’s silvery hair is---- a transparent bunny-ear headband.

With a glance, Subaru recognizes it as her ice. He marvels at how perfectly this bunny-eared heroine matches the charming image in his head.

“It’s quite cold.”

“Is this, what Subaru-kun was imagining....?”

“Honestly, I can’t agree with this....”

Alongside the bunny-eared Emilia, as if playing out Subaru’s delusions, the other girls don their respective animal ears.

Sharp, pointed cat ears exhibit Ram’s wild boldness while Rem’s drooping puppy ears show off her piddling yet loveable nature.

The round bear ears on Beatrice probably reflect her sweet side, or something to that effect.

Overwhelmed by this beautiful scene, Subaru falls to his knees as if in prayer,

“If only my phone battery didn’t die, all the pictures I could’ve taken. At least let me burn this scene into my mind.... now, on to the other matter....”

As Subaru burns the girls’ brilliance into his eyes, he can’t help but worry about Emilia’s transformation.

Such a marvelous command, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say it was the game’s crowning achievement---- but for Emilia, this should be far beyond her limits.

If anything, she was the type to aggressively *prevent* scenes like this.

“Subaru-kun, Subaru-kun.”

“What’s up, Rem?”

Seeing Rem beckoning him over, Subaru lends her an ear. With the dog ears on her head, she cutely tilts her head,

“Is Rem cute? If Subaru-kun wants, he can pet Rem’s head and spoil her....”

“Yeah, really cute, but right now, my favorite Rem is the one who explains what’s going on!”

“Is that so, how disappointing. But Rem still wants to be praised, so she’ll explain. Emilia-sama’s strange behavior is probably due to the effects of the [Fannel fruit].”

“Fannel fruit?”

At Subaru’s question, Rem nods with a trite “Yes.” Reaching into the pocket of her maid dress, she picks out a small berry,

“This is the Fannel fruit. By grinding it into a powder and ingesting it.... suddenly, one becomes completely honest with themselves. Quite surprising, yes?”

“I see, yeah, surprising.... So then, how did Emilia-tan ingest this thing?”

“Probably, when Rem tried to give Subaru-kun some Fannel fruit-laced tea, she made a mistake and gave it to Emilia-sama instead.... Ah, Subaru-kun, don’t rub my head so hard, it hurts, *it hurts!*”

“Bad kids need to be punished! Wait, so *that’s* what you were asking about!”

Subaru finally realized the reason she asked him “if his body felt hot.” By mistake, the medicine meant for Subaru went to Emilia instead, and she became cheerful like this as a result. But that would mean,

“If it’s supposed to make you honest, doesn’t that mean Emilia-tan’s actually pretty childish....?”

“Booo, you two are *always* so close.... *Nooo faaiiirrr----*”

As Subaru's fists rub fiercely against Rem's head, the now childish Emilia boos, shaking in protest. Sulking, she turns her head away,

“Just when I thought you were treating me nicely. Aaalways bringing my hopes up like this.... meanie. Meanie.
Me---aa---niie---”

“She's getting seriously upset for some reason, what do I do!?”

Childishly throwing a tantrum, Emilia recklessly rocks the table back and forth. At a loss for what to do, Subaru begs for help but,

“Well, Barusu.... since this situation is Barusu's fault, we'll leave you to take care of it.”

“That sounds good, I suppose. Bubby, come here and drink some tea with Betty.”

“Lia's pretty cute like this, but it's probably safer to keep my distance. So, we'll leave it to you, Subaru.”

“Weeell then, I have quiiite a bit of paperwork to attend to. I'll be heading back to my office now.”

“You traitors! I'll never trust you guys again!”

With the residents abandoning him one after the other, besides Subaru, only Emilia and Rem are left.

With just three people, continuing the King's Game is no longer possible.

“Can't be helped, let's call it quits here.... More importantly, what should we do about Emilia-tan?”

“No stopping! Don't wanna----! Let's keep playing----! Let's play----!”

“Rather than becoming honest, this looks more like age regression.... If being honest means becoming a spoiled kid, it's kind of sombering.”

Stubbornly shaking her head, Emilia desperately tries to continue the game. Subaru reaches out his hand to calm her, but in her state, she absolutely won't listen to reason.

Eventually, ignoring the baffled Subaru, Emilia grabs for one of the lots,

“Okay, it's me, I'm the king! Umm, Number [1]! Number [1] has to obey the king!”

“Emilia-tan, you can't play the King's Game by yourself....”

“Rem drew [2], so that logically makes Subaru-kun Number [1].”

“Rem-san!?”

An unexpected betrayal, Rem listlessly waves the lot marked [2] with her hand. Bringing it to her lips, she quietly whispers “Just for now” over to Subaru.

“Emilia-sama, I am at your command. Heeding the king’s orders is an underling’s duty afterall.”

“Okay so, Number [1] has to, Subaru has to....”

“....Please go easy on me though. My legs are buckling from all that running, and my throat still burns a bit from the tabasco, and that home-cooked meal was just awful.”

But despite his fears, Subaru presses on. With Emilia like this, he decides to take on whatever may come. Though he’d prefer not to stress his body or deal with crippling after-effects.

“Could you, pet my head?”

“Huh?”

At her unexpected request, Subaru accidentally raises his voice. When he opens his eyes, Emilia is staring back at him.

“My head, will you pet it? Do it like how you pet Rem, gently.”

“Huh, wait, that’s all you want?”

“Come on, hurry. Huu---rryy---!”

Emilia’s feet flail wildly. Pushed by her childishness, Subaru takes to her side and reaches for her long, silvery hair,

“Is-, is this okay?”

“A little softer.... yeah, like that.”

As Subaru pets her head, he feels the delicate sensation of Emilia’s smooth, silvery hair sifting between his fingers. Reminding himself it’s just a command, he somehow manages to keep his nervous hand from shaking. Like this, Subaru closes the gap between them, his heart beating furiously as he caresses her soft hair----

----Despite making such indecent commands, in the end, he was actually quite a timid boy.

And then,

“....huh, Emilia-tan?”

“-----”

Realizing Emilia had gone quiet, Subaru turns to find her sleeping peacefully, her upper body slumped carelessly over the table. On her tranquil sleeping face, he spies a hint of satisfaction,

“It appears she’s fallen asleep. The Fannel fruit has a strong drowsiness effect, after all.”

“I’m not even going to *ask* what you planned to do after making me honest and putting me to sleep.... Well, at least now I see why you kept the game going.”

“Rem thinks that even Emilia-sama needs some time to feel at ease. Afterall, the weight on her shoulders is no ordinary burden.”

As if she was feigning ignorance all along, Rem quickly reassumes her aura as an omnipotent maid. Gently stroking Emilia’s hair, she turns toward Subaru,

“Rem will be escorting Emilia-sama back to her room, but.... would Subaru-kun like to carry her?”

“Well, it’s a legitimate reason to hold her. Plus, I’d be the *worst* if I had you carry her back yourself. Do I even have an option?”

With a strained laugh, he quietly takes Emilia into his arms. Being even lighter than she looks, her daintiness surprises Subaru. He suddenly remembers to head upstairs, toward Emilia’s room.

“You know, it’s nice to relax like this once in a while. It was pretty fun too.”

“Yes, it’d be nice to play again sometime. Though the cleanup will be tough.”

Opening the dining hall door, Rem leads while Subaru, carrying Emilia, follows from behind. Cocking his head at Rem’s words, Subaru turns around. Behind them lies a disastrous scene, vestiges of the proud dining hall that once stood there.

After this, he and Rem will have to combine their utmost powers to straighten up whatever remains. Afterall, Ram certainly won’t help them.

“I wonder if these dog ears’ll ever melt. How long’re you gonna keep them on anyway?”

“Its composition doesn’t seem to be the kind that melts.... If Subaru-kun wishes, Rem doesn’t mind wearing them forever.”

“They’re cute, but not something to wear everyday. How about letting me see them again the next time we play?”

“----Yes. Let’s do that then. It’s a promise.”

Seeing Rem’s blissful smile, Subaru can’t help but smile back. In his arms, Emilia stirs slightly, a peaceful expression on her face. It was as if their own smiles somehow put her at ease, a truly heartwarming scene.



VAGUE SPOILERS PAST THIS POINT

----This story takes place a mere five days before Subaru and Emilia separate at the capital.

Subaru, Emilia, and even Rem. Not one of them could anticipate the harrowing future before them.
But if only one thing could be said for their uncertain future,

----They failed to keep the promise.

The seven residents of the Roswaal Manor being together and enjoying the King's Game, would never happen again.